

After, 5x9 = '59

Since quite a few of my friends have shown an interest in certain recent events, I thought I'd save time by making my views known this way. Hope you'll excuse the use of carbon paper. The tune for the first one, of course, is "Cryderville Jail"; these are about the fourth or fifth set of verses, since the story came out so gradually in the press. (Also, look out for the four-letter words. I feel pretty strongly on this.)

#### POPLARVILLE JAIL

Gather 'round, folks, and I'll tell you a tale  
Hell is a-poppin' in Poplarville jail -  
(cho.) It's hard times in the Poplarville jail,  
It's hard times, poor boy.

Poplarville jail, no jail at all -  
Law dogs hid out when the Klan came to call; (cho.)

They booked Mack Parker "Suspected of rapin'".  
Left the jail empty so he could be taken -

A white woman said that he was the man,  
Though his voice was different - here came the Klan..

Couldn't those badge-packers listen, or glance?  
Guilty or not, he hadn't a chance -

They hauled Mack Parker right out of that cell  
Before he was shot, he was beat all to hell -

Into the river his body went flyin' -  
If you call that justice, you know that you're lyin'!

The law says that we're equal, dark face or pale -  
I hope that the Klan lands in Poplarville jail!

~~Was there ever a klaneman~~  
And, if that old Constitution is right,

~~What's good for the black man is good for the white..~~

And now I have come to the end of my tale  
Of an empty cell in the Poplarville jail....

Had a thought - another song takes on a new meaning now. "That old man river, that old man river - he must know somethin', but he don't say nothin' - "...it may be due for an added line or two.

Then, along came another story in the papers - of a students' strike. Three words kept running through my head - "four white men". Over and over. Hammering. Pounding. Driving. Building up like - Three Blind Mice...

Four white men,  
Four white men.  
One black girl,  
One black girl..  
The Poplarville booking was mighty sad,  
But look what Tallahassee has had -  
Turned it around, and it's four times as bad!  
Four white men...

Not much in the way of a song, I'll admit, but the sheer irony of the situation is, to me, appalling. "This land is your land, this land is my land" - and what is it coming to?

Verses, Unlimited.  
*Ernie Harris*



Sunday, May 10, '59.

The verses on the other side are now several days old - here's a mixture of old and new. Some time back I overhauled the chorus of "Where Can The Dimple Be", a popular song I liked pretty well. Saw a news article a day or so ago, where an unemployed Detroit auto worker was interviewed on the labor situation. His comment was too good to be forgotten: "Ike says things are picking up. Sure they are - they picked up my car yesterday, and they're picking up my TV tomorrow." About fifteen minutes ago, with the aid of 3 smokes and 3 cups of coffee, 3 verses took shape. Here they are.

### WHERE CAN THE DOLLAR BE?

(chorus): It's quite a puzzle, you'll agree -  
Where the dickens can the dollar be?  
Payments, taxes - it's a sin.  
Spent before the things come in..  
Payday comes, and you're broke again!  
Where can the dollar be?

I work my life away in the good old U.S.A.,  
And try my best to earn my beans and bread -  
Maybe I should get a book- learn to be a legal crook;  
Somehow I never seem to get ahead. (cho.)

It was just a year ago that work got mighty slow.  
Ike says things are picking up, and they sure are;  
For the finance company just picked up my TV,  
Tomorrow they are picking up my car! (cho.)

Well, at least I'm not sick, so I guess I shouldn't kick  
For you stay out of trouble keeping still...  
When I die, I hope I drown and my body's never found -  
So no one will have to pay the funeral bill! (cho.)

And, since the mail doesn't run on Sundays, you have my absolute latest one. On my test run of this, I used the 12-string guitar - played in E, which came out as G, actually. It makes a wonderful racket. Now, if you folks will excuse me, I'm going to go wash some of the day's cement off of my filthy fists. See you later.

As ever,  
me.